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The Iron Wheel

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Chapter 1 by Luke Meyers

We fled the blazes. Our lands were devastated. We pressed on to the west, with no real hope of refuge. But to the east was only blood and terror, and so we marched. My feet and back ached, from the trek and from my meager burden, all that remained of what I had known. My father was grim; he seemed lost. We took turns carrying my little sister, Susanna. Mother hadn't made it out.

It wasn't safe by day. We took shelter anywhere, everywhere. Wretched places overflowing with miserable refugees. Each one's story different, but all the same now. By night, we fanned across the countryside, stumbling in the moonlight. We ached, we starved, we despaired, but we kept on.

We knew we could not stop. Deep and steady in the distance, we could still hear the terrifying cadence of drums.

Chapter 2 by Lance Felix

Years ago, my father had told me that life is about breathing... Now, we were holding our breath.

The drums went on for months as we crawled. They didn't even stop at night, not a single beat missed. We could feel them all on our skin, cold, piercing. That's the only thing I can remember from that time. Then one day, they stopped.

Father was completely deaf by then. He couldn't understand what we were trying to tell him,

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We rejoiced for a while, but nothing changed. Not that much. We were still starving, sick, and bloody. We continued walking on for days, weeks, searching for any village left standing, or at least a sliver of clear water where we could start bunching back the crumbs that were left from our lives. And one day, we found it. A river, not even half a mile wide, but an ocean to us. We stayed there.

This morning, the drums came back.

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